# MASK UP
# WE NEED YOU

## PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY, COVID-19, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

*"Viruses reveal the fault lines in our culture."*

- Steven W. Thrasher, *The Viral Underclass: The Human Toll When Inequality and Disease Collide*[1]

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**PANDEMICS ARE A TOOL OF THE COLONIZER.
REFUSE TO DO THE BLOODY WORK OF EMPIRE.**

As Steven Thrasher writes in his critical 2022 book, *The Viral Underclass: The Human Toll When Inequality and Disease Collide*, viruses, and most recently the SARS-COV-2 virus, reveal inequities of society, not of nature.

As we witness US-made and -funded bombs fall relentlessly onto the people of Gaza, while the rubble of Palestinian life and homes is methodically trucked to construct a US port, built inevitably to exploit Gazan oil fields; while aid is blocked and medical kits containing safety scissors are confiscated; while meager airdrops of inedible food fall onto and kill Palestinian children and destroy essential remaining infrastructure like hospital solar panels; while poets, artists, journalists, medical specialists, mothers, fathers, children, and elders are targeted alongside Palestinian culture and futures; while disease, starvation, thirst, and injuries threaten traumatized families who have already survived 75+ years of occupation — we understand these attacks are part of a larger blueprint of amerikkkan-israeli colonization and imperialism.

## BY BOMB OR BY PATHOGEN, THESE ATTACKS ON PALESTINIAN LIFE ARE MAN-MADE, INTENTIONAL POLICY CHOICES, ONES INTENDED TO CONSOLIDATE WEALTH FOR THE MIS-RULERS OF THE WORLD.

Like the genocide of Palestinians, the unmitigated spread of Covid-19 across our communities is a policy choice — not an inevitability. Viruses defy borders, and when we say *We all breathe the same air*, we too, are not speaking in metaphor. Gazans report having been infected with Covid multiple times over six months of siege and genocide.[2] And the very strains of the virus that plague Palestinians today *directly evolved and made their way to Gaza* as a result of the global north's policies of denial and normalization.

**The occupation and its siege on Gaza is an invasion on all fronts.** Occupation forces bring new strains of Covid to Gaza with every incursion, simultaneously throwing parties and concerts while leading invasions of Al-Shifa Hospital and Nuseirat refugee camp. Every unmasked sniper, foreign aid worker, and reporter that enters Gaza off a transcontinental flight creates a pathway for novel strains to attack Palestinians made increasingly vulnerable.

Wherever we are in the world, viruses reveal both our inextricable connection and our common enemy — not viruses themselves, nor even necessarily those who spread them, but the larger forces of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism that take root in our psyches and spur us to be their foot soldiers.

This zine is a primer for those who consider themselves co-strugglers for Palestinian liberation, yet may not understand the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic as both a genocide in itself, and a tool of genocide that perpetuates all others. While we must disavow the forces of individualism that encourage us to see others' struggles as distinct and separate from our own, we must also recognize the ways that the US empire asks us daily, as *individuals*, to do its blood-stained work by participating in an entirely preventable, mass death and disabling event.

## WHAT IF WE TOLD YOU THERE WAS A TANGIBLE WAY YOU COULD REFUSE TO TAKE ON THE EMPIRE'S DEADLY WORK, EVERY DAY?

Black abolitionist Estelle Ellison writes about the interconnections between Palestine and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in her critical essay, *Falling By The Wayside*, a title taken from Dr. Anthony Fauci's 2023 declaration that, when it comes to Covid-19, "the vulnerable will fall by the wayside."[3] Ellison peels back the layers of Fauci's rallying cry, urging so-called leftists and anarchists to break the cognitive dissonance that leads activists to take on this death-making mission as if it was our own. She warns that failing to draw the connections between Palestine and Covid fuels the very death machine itself: "Covid denialism, which includes going out in public unmasked, supplies israel with a very real material weapon with a capacity to murder at a scale that greatly exceeds that of bombs, missiles, tanks, and rifles."[4]

We echo Ellison's declaration that **"Genocide cannot be fought by making peace with other concurrent genocides,"** tasking you, our reader, with the job of drawing connections between struggles that the amerikkkan-israeli empire desperately does not want you to see — and then taking action, as Palestinian poet and journalist Mohammed El-Kurd demands of us, to **"embody the Palestinian condition, the condition of resistance and refusal, in the lives we lead and the company we keep."**

To become conscious of the ongoing pandemic and take on the daily, militant practice of wearing a mask in public is **to refuse to turn away from the violence our government inflicts upon those deemed disposable.**

# I KNOW PEOPLE ARE DYING EACH DAY

*"The rallying cry that we are all Palestinians must abandon the metaphor and manifest materially.*

*Meaning, all of us—Palestinians or otherwise—must embody the Palestinian condition, the condition of resistance and refusal, in the lives we lead and the company we keep.*

*Meaning we reject our complicity in this bloodshed and our inertia when confronted with all of that blood. Because Gaza cannot stand alone in sacrifice."*

- Mohammed El-Kurd, *Are We Indeed All Palestinians?*[5]

## TO EXPOSE THE VIOLENT UNDERPINNINGS OF WESTERN IMPERIALISM, OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST MASS DEATH REQUIRES CONSCIOUSNESS AND CONVICTION.

In spring 2020, a group of almost 300 children ages 7-12 were asked what they knew and wanted to know about Covid in an international study on health literacy in kids.[6] One child wrote, *"People play it down and tell me it can't kill people, but I know people are dying each day."* As we enter the fifth year of the pandemic, the seventh month of genocide in Gaza, and 75+ years of Zionist occupation, this child's words echo with a haunting relevance.

**Basic facts about the virus should not be mysterious.** And yet, in 2024, the dissolution of public-health education has become so abysmal that people are taking to TikTok to describe a "Mystery Virus" that's hitting them, making the topic trend as they describe symptoms that last weeks and months.[7] Some of these videos have millions of views. (Spoiler: it's Covid.[8]) This is the direct product of a concerted disinformation campaign.

**Just as we must educate the masses on the truths of settler colonialism, imperialism, and the genocidal Zionist project, we must also insist that basic health education is imperative to self-determination.** Everyone deserves the educational tools to understand *how* Covid spreads, *what* it does to our bodies, and *why* preventative measures like masks, tests, isolation, and communication are critical to our collective health and futures.

**The amerikkkan-israeli project is held together by the belief that the empire is the moral arbiter of the world, even as its trail of destruction is clear.** We know the truth. *People are dying preventable deaths each day.*

## WHEN THE US GOVERNMENT DECLARED THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OVER, THEY LIED.

And by force or by collusion, the rest of the world followed suit. But Covid never ended. It's an airborne virus that's still circulating, killing, and disabling people across the world, here and in Gaza.

Between October 2023 and March 2024 alone, Covid killed 39,759 people in the US — *closely matching the 34,367 Palestinians murdered by the occupation in the same time period,* both likely vast undercounts.[9, 10, 11] **Accepting this kind of unrelenting mass death as normal sets the stage to allow even greater atrocities to come.**

So why do so many people believe the pandemic ended, or that Covid is "mild," that it's "like the flu," or that it's only a concern for "high-risk" people? And why did the myth of pandemic-as-past-tense become so alluring for so many people? To find our answers, we need only to look to Genocide Joe.

In September 2022, Biden appeared on 60 Minutes for the first Detroit Auto Show in three years. The interviewer, walking Biden through rows of shiny new cars, asked the president, "Is the pandemic over?"

With confidence, Biden replied, "The pandemic is over. We still have a problem with Covid. We're still doing a lot of work on it. It's – but the pandemic is over." Gesturing, he speculated,"If you notice, no one is wearing masks, everybody seems to be in pretty good shape, and so I think it's changing, and I think - this is a perfect example of it."[12]

**Headlines raced to announce the end of the pandemic, distracting from underlying science that told a different story: Covid was still spreading and people were still dying.**

Nevertheless, this unscientific understanding began to take hold within the minds of the amerikkkan public, trickling into the so-called "Left." By September 2023, a year after Biden's prime-time appearance, 93,423 more people across the US had died of Covid.[13]

**Biden consistently prioritizes *public perception* of the pandemic over *public health*.** The president and CDC's "vibes-only" approach has been to downplay, distract, and discourage masking — because **if people think the pandemic is over, the government will no longer be responsible.**

**This "sociological production of the end of the pandemic,"[14] has single-handedly dismantled the social safety nets we built to survive the very crisis in which we remain.**

# NOT JUST A VIRUS BUT A DISEASE: COVID'S CUMULATIVE DAMAGE

## COVID IS AN AIRBORNE VIRUS THAT CAUSES LONG-TERM DAMAGE TO EVERY ORGAN OF THE BODY.[15]

These impacts are **cumulative — each infection adds up, increasingly damaging your organs and immune system with each subsequent reinfection.**[16]

**Initial symptoms do not *necessarily* tell you what's happening inside of your body, which is why some people may "feel fine" after a Covid infection, but experience drastic damage internally.** This damage can occur inside your body even if you didn't experience any symptoms at all![17]

A variety of **physical, cognitive, and mental-health impairments** can develop and linger in the weeks, months, and years after infection. Together, these post-infection impacts are called Long Covid.[18] With every infection, the risk of Long Covid, hospitalization, and death increases.

## WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT LONG COVID, ONLY FOUR YEARS IN, IS THAT IT IS LIFE-CHANGING, LIFE-SHATTERING, AND ANYONE, AT ANY AGE, CAN GET IT.

One in ten *infections* will lead to Long Covid.[19] One in five adults in the US has Long Covid,[20] with the burden of Long Covid falling more heavily on already-marginalized communities: Black and Brown people, women, trans and bisexual people, and folks with lower educational access and income.[21] Children make up 20% of all Long Covid cases in the US.[22]

**There is no cure for Long Covid.** Many people with Long Covid are met by their doctors with blank stares, even antagonism, but rarely with diagnoses. Over 200 symptoms have been linked to Long Covid, but our diagnostic tools are so limited that far more people have Long Covid than our medical system is equipped to recognize. Only 7% of doctors know how to diagnose Long Covid.[23] Research and funding has been withheld. We are only just beginning to understand the full, *cumulative* impacts of Covid on the body.

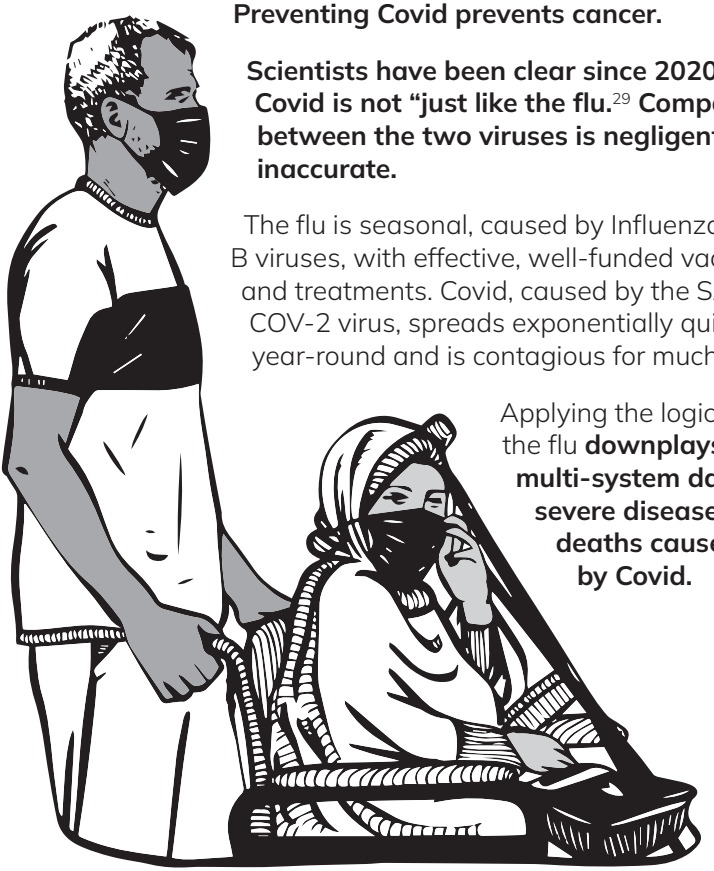
Even our current language to describe Covid symptoms fails to describe realities. **"Fatigue" can mean bed-bound while "brain fog" is actual brain damage.** Within a year of getting Covid, the risk of heart failure, stroke, irregular heart rhythms, cardiac arrest, and blood clots increases up to five times.[24] And Covid weakens your immune system, making you more susceptible with each infection.

**While early public health messaging emphasized Covid's impacts on the lungs and heart, new research shows Covid *also* significantly attacks the brain.** Studies reveal Covid infections cause prolonged inflammation of the brain, shrinkage of the brain's volume, early-onset dementia,[25] and **brain damage equivalent to seven years of aging,** with more severe infections resulting in **damage equivalent to aging 20 years.**[26]

**Covid also causes "accelerated biological aging"** by shortening our telomeres — parts of DNA that can no longer reproduce when they get too short. HIV impacts telomeres similarly, leading to the onset of aging-related diseases.[27]

***Accelerated aging* causes early-onset cancer in young people,** leading to a 42% increased risk of developing lung cancer, a 22% increase in the risk of gastrointestinal cancer, and a 36% increase in the risk of uterine cancer.[28]

**Preventing Covid prevents cancer.**



**Scientists have been clear since 2020 that Covid is not "just like the flu.**[29] **Comparison between the two viruses is negligent and inaccurate.**

The flu is seasonal, caused by Influenza A and B viruses, with effective, well-funded vaccines and treatments. Covid, caused by the SARS-COV-2 virus, spreads exponentially quicker year-round and is contagious for much longer.

Applying the logic of the flu **downplays the multi-system damage, severe disease, and deaths caused by Covid.**

## MINIMIZING COVID'S DAMAGE ON OUR ORGAN SYSTEMS IS INCREDIBLY DANGEROUS.

**Encouraging "relaxed" behavior puts our communities at increased risk for Long Covid and death.** In reality, Covid's damage to the immune system is **far more similar to HIV than the flu.**[30] Protecting yourself from Covid will protect you from the flu.

**In the West Bank, a 2023 study showed 41% of people have Long Covid.**[31] Palestinians living under occupation amidst checkpoints, bombings, incursions, settler violence, and systemic carcinogen exposure experience exponentially worsened outcomes with Long Covid.

# AN ECONOMY OF DEATH

*"We Palestinians express our solidarity with our sisters and brothers all over the globe in fighting the pandemic and the capitalist corporations which rake in profits on the backs of workers."*

- Palestine New Federation Of Trade Union,
*Statement For International Unity And Struggle*[32]

## THE RULING CLASS WILL ALWAYS PRIORITIZE THE "HEALTH" OF THE ECONOMY OVER THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE.

In 2021, the Delta Airlines CEO asked the CDC to reduce their Covid isolation period from 10 to 5 days.[33] The CDC complied, effectively forcing workers back to their jobs while sick. The next day, Delta halved their sick pay for workers.[34] Around the same time, the CDC released a vaccine ad campaign showing a worker with crossed arms. "I'm not letting Covid-19 take my shifts," the worker says with determination,[35] **a far cry from the agency's previous encouragements to stay home when sick to protect each other.**

**The consensus of the powerful was clear: if the people are still practicing Covid precautions, they won't work or spend as much.** Within the first month of the pandemic, retail sales had plummeted by 16.4% across the US, striking fear into capitalists' hearts.[36]

Understanding that amerikkkans were exercising caution based on perceived risk, the CDC, Trump, then Biden chose to systematically **downplay, minimize, and create a false sense of "victory"** over the following years to convince us that Covid was no longer a threat to our health. Above all else, they wanted amerikkkans back in stores and factories. Since consumer spending makes up 70% of the US economy, it didn't matter that the science wasn't there.[37] The point was distraction.

**With declarations of victory, Biden ended the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency on May 11, 2023.** Following four years of increasing death, disability, eviction, and houselessness, amerikkkans were abandoned with nothing but their bootstraps.[38] The government had washed its hands of responsibility. **We lost free tests and vaccines, official Covid case tracking, expanded SNAP benefits, unemployment and pandemic aid for housing, education, and other essential services.**[39] Between April 2023 and 2024, a devastating **19.6 million people were kicked off Medicaid,** formerly protected by continuous enrollment.[40] Without easy, free access to tests and basic healthcare, many people no longer have the *privilege* to even know whether they have Covid. **Amidst this unprecedented Medicaid purge, mass death and disablement have only continued, now invisibilized (and privatized).**

## GENOCIDE IS DRIVEN BY THE GREED OF COLONIZERS.

Zionist propaganda follows a parallel playbook of capitalistic distraction — it's no coincidence a "humanitarian pause" in Gaza coincided with Black Friday, or that major assaults on Rafah flew under the radar as amerikkkans were transfixed by the Super Bowl.

**While the imperial core's tax-paying workers fund bombs dropped on Gaza, the genocide of Palestinians rakes in profits for warmongers.**

Between October 2023 and April 2024, weapons manufacturers have increased their profits by supplying state-of-the-art bombs for the occupation to drop on Gazans. Raytheon's stock value increased by 38%, General Dynamics by 20%, Lockheed Martin's by 12%, and Caterpillar's has jumped by 42%.

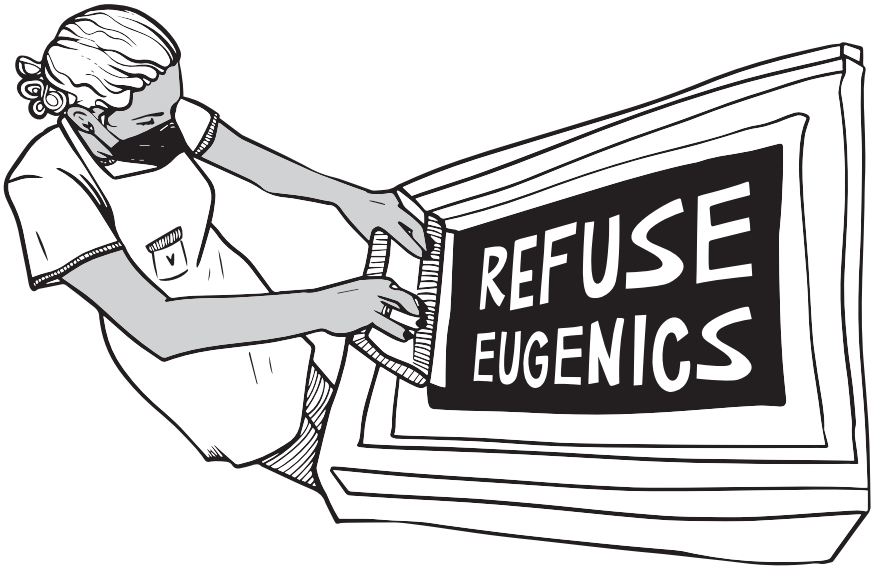
The US stock market has expanded by 13% over the past four years of the pandemic, thanks to the government's prioritization of the economy over public health.[41] US GDP, the main measure of economic "health," grew 3.4% more in the last quarter of 2023 than a year earlier due to consumer and government spending and exports.[42] Foreign military sales boosted the economy, too. In 2023, the US hit its highest annual total of sales and assistance provided to "ally and partner nations" of $80.9 billion, up 56% from the year before.[43]

"The pandemic no longer rules our lives," Biden declared triumphantly in his March 2024 State of the Union Address, two months after the second-largest Covid wave since the pandemic began.[44] "I inherited an economy that was on the brink," he boasted. "Now our economy is the envy of the world!"[45]

The same week, as US-made and -sold bombs rained on Gaza, the CDC ruled to shrink their Covid isolation guideline down to a single day,[46] making life ever-more dangerous for the poor, working class, and members of the Global South. Now, anyone can enter public space while positive for Covid, and **bosses have the CDC's blessing to fire workers who choose to isolate longer than a day.**

Workers, children, elders, and families now face their fifth, eighth, or tenth Covid infection and are forced back to work or school with ever-worsening illness and an ever-increasing racial-wealth gap.[47] Meanwhile, the ruling class holds meetings behind closed doors with perfectly purified air, state-of-the-art ventilation, and tightly controlled PCR testing protocols that ensure they will not contract the virus.[48]

## THE POINT IS TO KEEP WORKERS EXHAUSTED, DISTRACTED, AND TOO SICK TO ORGANIZE AGAINST OUR COMMON STRUGGLES.




*"As disabled organizers, we cannot ignore how settler-colonial occupation violently disables people and leaves them to die."*

*- Covid Solidarity NYC Statement on Palestine*[49]

*"The american state and israeli settler colony have found a dress rehearsal for more targeted genocides in their construction of today's eugenicist normalcy wherein everyone is expected to sustain repeated covid infections indefinitely until death."*

- Estelle Ellison, *Falling By The Wayside*[50]

## WE ARE ALL AT RISK FOR COVID, BUT MINIMIZING PROPAGANDA SELLS US MASK-OFF NORMALCY BY ASSURING US THAT IT IS "ONLY" DISABLED PEOPLE WHO WILL GET SICK AND DIE.

The insistence on **removing all Covid precautions in public space has accelerated the continued spread and mutation of the virus**, making everyday life increasingly dangerous for *everyone*, especially disabled people.

In January 2022, as the Omicron variant was ravaging the globe, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky took to the air with Good Morning America to reassure the public everything was under control.[51] Referencing a recent CDC study on deaths in vaccinated populations,[52] Walensky tried to portray a positive forecast. "The overwhelming number of deaths, over 75%, occurred in people who had at least four comorbidities," she explained. "So really, these were people who were *unwell* to begin with," which she described as "really encouraging news."

*Only the unwell will die.* **Walensky's reassurance handed many not-yet-disabled amerikkkans the golden sense of safety they longed for.** It didn't matter that her statistic was skewed, only addressing deaths in vaccinated people (and grossly misrepresenting the data)[53] — **Biden had already primed us to see unvaccinated people as unworthy of care and responsible for their own deaths** when he coined the term "pandemic of the unvaccinated" in September 2021.[54]

While most liberals were eager to portray the unvaccinated as MAGA Trump supporters, by January 2022 only 28% of Gazans were fully vaccinated,[55] and only 9.5% of the Global South had been vaccinated at all.[56] **In just a few months, amerikkkans were gleefully throwing off their masks in airplanes mid-flight as mandates were lifted.**[57]

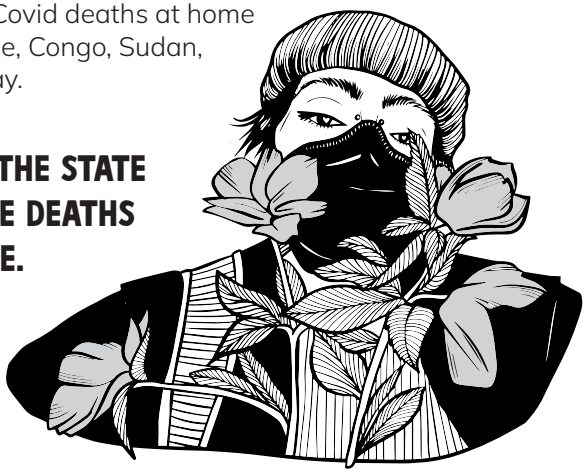
## BUT WHO HAS THE AMERIKKKAN PUBLIC CONSENTED TO LET FALL BY THE WAYSIDE?

Our government never told us Covid would be "mild" for disabled people. They have always told us that disabled people will get sick and die. What they have hidden from us is that **Covid will disable and kill us all.** With every infection, Covid weakens your immune system — putting every single person who's had even a single bout of Covid in that so-called "encouraging," "high-risk" category. They didn't say *if you're not disabled yet, Covid will disable you, and once you are disabled, we'll celebrate your death, too.*

**Disabled Palestinians, maimed for their existence in the amerikkkan-israeli crosshairs, are thus deemed especially acceptable for death.**

**Celebrating the deaths of undesired populations is a longstanding tradition of the amerikkkan-israeli empire.** By separating the fates of the vaccinated and unvaccinated, "well" and "unwell," and completely disregarding the Global South altogether, Biden and the CDC stoked the flames of eugenics already deeply embedded into the amerikkkan psyche.[58] Offloading suffering onto the *Other* manufactures our consent for the simultaneous genocides that rage today — from the Covid deaths at home to those in Palestine, Congo, Sudan, Armenia, and Tigray.

## REFUSE TO LET THE STATE TELL YOU WHOSE DEATHS ARE JUSTIFIABLE.



# FREE THEM ALL:

## ON PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

*"Palestinian prisoners are at the center of the struggle for freedom and justice in Palestine – they represent the imprisonment of a people and a nation."*

*- Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network*[59]

### EVERY PALESTINIAN IS A POLITICAL PRISONER.

The machinery of israeli-amerikkkan empire relies on ethnic cleansing, incarceration, and slavery to violently create and enforce colonial borders and settler colonies. As Black revolutionary Angela Davis has put it, "Before Palestinians are even arrested, they are already in prison."[60] Since 1967, over 850,000 Palestinians have experienced Zionist detention.[61] The occupation has taken 7,350 new captives in the West Bank between October 7 and March 22, 2024.[62]

"[T]he demands of our prisoners remain the starting point in our strategizing and organizing for liberation," the Palestinian Youth Movement wrote in their October 2022 statement, *PRISONERS ARE THE COMPASS*. "Until every occupation jail is emptied, until all our people are free, we struggle on."[63]

**The freedom of Palestinian prisoners is critical to the freedom of Palestine.** The ongoing Operation Al-Aqsa Flood is a *direct* attempt to release the thousands of Palestinians held in Israeli jails.[64]

**"The prison does not confine us with its walls and barbed wire alone,"** Palestinian writer and revolutionary Walid Daqqa once said in a smuggled recording. He was the longest-held Palestinian prisoner when he was martyred on April 7, 2024. Imprisoned for over 38 years, he developed a rare form of bone-marrow cancer and was killed by Zionist medical neglect.[65] He wrote prolifically from prison, believing that all Palestinians exist in either the "little prison" or "big prison" — Zionist jails or Zionist occupation, and that both serve to not only to torture Palestinians and erode national unity, but to dissolve Palestinian revolutionary consciousness.[66]

**The perpetuation of the pandemic only intensifies the violence of captivity.** In prisons and administrative detention centers, viruses spread easily between people forced into cramped living quarters. Often lacking or denied basic medical services, prisoners are rendered even more vulnerable to viruses and disease.

At the time of his martyrdom, Walid Daqqa's immune system had been severely compromised and attacked by every weapon of the occupation. He urgently needed a bone-marrow transplant, but his care was withheld. **Daqqa was murdered for his steadfast commitment to Palestinian liberation and his belief that the children of Palestine will see freedom in their lifetimes.**[67] Even in death, the Zionist state will withhold his body from his family and the people until the end of his sentence in March 2025.[68]

**Over its 17-year blockade, Gaza has often been called an open-air prison.** Now, it can only be described as a **death camp.** Those in Gaza who've survived six months of siege and genocide in addition to extreme trauma, thirst, starvation, crowding, devastating injuries, and very limited medical services, are especially vulnerable to Covid. People are very, very sick, with a variety of preventable diseases -— in addition to Covid — which become worse when compounded. The occupation has made it critical to its mission to disable as many Palestinians as dare remain alive in their onslaught.[69]

## THE IOF HAVE BEEN CLEAR THAT WIDESPREAD TRANSMISSION OF DISEASE SUPPORTS THEIR GENOCIDAL MISSION.

Like the practice of shooting Palestinians in the legs and ankles, creating conditions that speed the spread of Covid and other diseases is all part of the plan. IOF Genocider Giora Eiland openly described disease as a means to their desired end, declaring, "Severe epidemics in the south of the Gaza Strip will bring victory closer..."[70] **Where annihilation is the goal, death and disease are welcome.**

# MASKS OFFER THE BEST PROTECTION, RESISTANCE + SOLIDARITY

## MASKS ARE THE MOST SINGLE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL WE HAVE TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID.[71]

But they work best when everyone wears them.[72] Without widespread masking, Covid is allowed to rage, unmitigated, across our communities. And as long as we lack access to free and accurate testing, case tracking, and significant investments in Long-Covid research, our understanding of the virus' true presence and impact will remain obscured.

When an infected person exhales, Covid travels through the air via larger droplets and tiny, invisible *aerosols*, which contain virus particles that can travel long distances on air currents.[73] Whereas larger, heavier *droplets* can't travel far and fall to the ground pretty quickly upon exhale, **Covid aerosols can quickly fill any crowded, poorly-ventilated space, moving invisibly, like smoke, to infect anyone in the room.** Aerosols travel on air currents and linger in the air for hours after an infected person has left. **Covid spreads outdoors, too,** especially in crowded spaces like outdoor markets or concerts.[74]

**Masks are an incredibly effective way to limit the amount of virus in the air in any given space.** The more people wearing masks, the more effective masks will be. (Less virus in the air = less of a chance someone will become infected.) To adequately protect against aerosol transmission, **we need high-filtration masks, such as KN95, N95, or KF94 respirators.**[75]

**While cheaper, surgical masks offer significantly less filtration (and little protection for the wearer),**[76] **while cloth masks cannot filter aerosols at all, rendering them ineffective against Covid.** Airborne transmission is much more significant than via surfaces, so **hand washing alone isn't protective enough to prevent the spread of Covid.**

## YOU DON'T NEED SYMPTOMS TO SPREAD COVID.

In fact, 60% of all transmission happens pre- or asymptomatically.[77] This means that you can spread Covid to others before your symptoms start to show up, and/or without experiencing any symptoms at all! This is why universal masking and frequent testing is so important — *we cannot know with certainty if we have Covid at any moment.* We mask in order to not accidentally kill or disable the people around us, and prevent further ripples of infection. **Wearing a mask is the single most impactful way to prevent mass death, wherever you are.**

Beyond combatting viruses and surveillance, national liberation groups from the Zapatistas to Hamas mask their faces as a commitment to collective struggle, concealing their individual identities to create a more unified front against colonialism and imperialism.

High-filtration masks are also life-saving PPE that protect lungs from the dust of bombs and rubble, another protection not granted to those in Gaza living under siege and bombardment.

# REFUSE TO NORMALIZE, OBSCURE, AND DENY

*"Genocide apathy / pandemic apathy / climate apathy / all have the same root."*

- Entangled Roots Press[78]

*"Normalization...is an attempt by the oppressor to colonize the mind of the oppressed with the notion that oppression is a fact of life that must be coped with, not resisted."*

- The Palestinian Boycott, Divest, Sanctions (BDS) National Committee[79]

**Exercise media literacy.** Palestinian journalists are targeted and martyred for documenting their own genocide in real time. Between October 2023 and March 2024, at least 137 journalists have been assassinated by Zionist occupiers.[80, 81] Reflecting and amplifying their commitment to truth and moral clarity is the least we can do — study up on common media obfuscation tactics and refuse the genociders' bait!

"The news is a weapon," a joint statement by Palestinian Youth Movement and Writers Against the War on Gaza said, calling out the New York Times' longstanding history of atrocity propaganda — from post-9/11 lies on "weapons of mass destruction" to their unevidenced claims of "mass rape" by Palestinian resistance on October 7th.[82] "The New York Times is fighting Israel's war. Journalists of conscience should refuse to be conscripted...It is time to divest from the notion that the Times is a 'paper of record' ruled by journalistic standards. **We call it what it is: state-run media."**

The NYT style guide, too, bans the words "genocide," "ethnic cleansing" and "refugee camps" when writing about Palestine. Other discouraged terms include "occupied territory," descriptions of violence against Gazans as "slaughter," "massacre," or "carnage," and even the word Palestine itself.[83]

## ZIONISTS AND EUGENICISTS RELY ON YOU TO BE POORLY INFORMED TO FALL FOR THEIR SIMPLIFIED, DECONTEXTUALIZED, REVISIONIST, RACIST AND ABLEIST TAKES.

Zionist normalization encourages the acceptance and legitimacy of the occupation state and its settlers, in total disregard of Palestinian life, land, culture, history, and struggle.

**Just as we resist Zionist normalization, we must say *no* to Covid-denying journalism that:** describes the pandemic in the past tense, blames unvaccinated and disabled people for their own deaths, encourages individualistic behavior over public health, minimizes the virus' danger, describes Covid as "seasonal," offers scientifically unfounded optimism, depicts sickness as "mysterious," or fails to mention Covid at all.

## REFUSE BUSINESS AS USUAL WHILE GENOCIDE IS WAGED.

The simple act of wearing a mask in public (and keeping it on for pictures!) is a direct refusal to participate in the eugenicist campaign to invisibilize the pandemic, disappear disabled people from public life, and punish those who don't fall in line.

**Palestinians call for this visible solidarity, too, asking co-strugglers to wear our keffiyehs in public to amplify the Palestinian liberation struggle wherever we are.**

Masks also provide crucial protection from surveillance and facial-recognition technology. Criminalizing masks and face coverings is a strategy to silence dissent and criminalize protest itself. 18 attempted US laws on face coverings have been put in motion since 2017; North Dakota and Arizona have already passed legislation that harshens sentences if face coverings are worn while committing criminal offenses.[84]

**It is no coincidence that masks and keffiyehs are becoming increasingly criminalized in public space,** following decades of Islamophobic legislation criminalizing hijabs and niqabs.[85]

# PROVIDE + REQUIRE MASKS FOR OUR LIBERATED FUTURE

*"Real freedom is a life that doesn't depend on oppression, genocide and harm to others to exist, and in pursuit of that freedom, no separation between our lives and our struggle for liberation can exist"*

- Veera Sulaiman, *A Promise Not a Statement*[86]

## ORGANIZERS MUST TAKE SERIOUSLY OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PALESTINIAN LIBERATION TO PROTECT EACH OTHER, MILITANTLY.

We must not only provide and **require** N95, KN95, or KF94 masks at all our actions and events, but offer political education that places Covid and Palestine as firmly connected to all liberation struggles. Be insistent, too, that protesting mass death doesn't end at the protest, but continues every time you enter public space with a mask on, socializing included.

## WE MUST BE FIRM IN OUR BELIEF THAT MASKING IS NOT TOO MUCH TO REQUIRE.

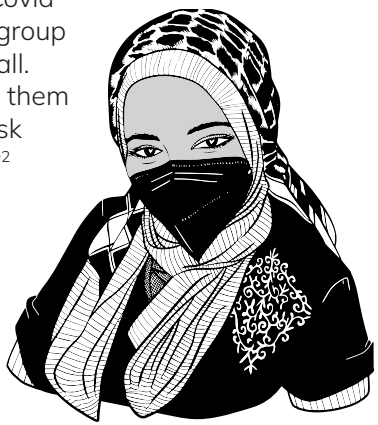
When we merely encourage or suggest mask-wearing, we perpetuate the individualistic myth that masking is a matter of "personal choice" rather than collective responsibility. **Simply "encouraging" masks does not ensure any degree of safety for participants.** *Requiring* masks ensures the greatest amount of safety for the greatest number of people. Reject the notion that expecting safety for all through mask requirements is equivalent to policing — collective safety is the only path to abolition.

Be clear, consistent, and preemptive with your access information. No one should have to scroll through the comments of your post to know if the event will be masked. **Put it on your flyers!**[87]

## THANKS TO THE TIRELESS ADVOCACY OF DISABLED ORGANIZERS, PRO-PALESTINE PROTESTERS ARE INCREASINGLY TAKING TO THE STREETS WITH MASKS ON.

In January 2024, a fully-N95-masked, fully-tested crowd of 400+ filled the California State Capitol in an action for Palestine.[88] In February, 19 Brown University students went on hunger strike for eight days to pressure Brown to divest from Palestinian genocide. Organizers circulated a fully-masked image of the strikers;[89] explaining that hunger is immunocompromising, protesters were required to test and wear N95 or KN95 masks in solidarity with immunocompromised Gazans experiencing forced starvation.[90] In April 2024, Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine set the same example, requiring masks and handing them out to hundreds of protestors at their campus Gaza Solidarity Encampment.[91]

**It only takes a few people to hand out masks to a crowd.** Where organizers may fail to protect protesters with mask requirements and other Covid precautions, any individual or small group can act autonomously to protect us all. Bring masks to the protest and pass them out with a friend! Find your local mask bloc to obtain free masks and tests![92] Volunteer with them or just say hi!



## INSIST THAT MASKS BE PART OF THE LIBERATED FUTURE WE'RE BUILDING.

## BE ADAPTIVE, GET CREATIVE, CHANGE YOUR BEHAVIOR.

The world we're building won't look like 2019. Our collective liberation requires us to acknowledge the ongoing airborne pandemic, put a mask back on, and choose collective safety over mass death and disablement in the name of "normalcy." Being adaptive means no more eating in restaurants, no more unmasked raves, concerts, and parties.

## LETTING GO OF HOW-IT'S-ALWAYS-BEEN-DONE AND ADAPTING TO OUR CURRENT REALITIES IS THE ONLY WAY WE CREATE OUR LIBERATED FUTURE.

*"Pandemic safety is a branch on the tree of liberation for all marginalized people, everywhere...Pandemic apathy is a tool of white supremacy that aids ethnic cleansing, genocides, racism, and lack of climate emergency awareness."*

- Shishi Rose, *Pandemic Apathy Allows Genocide*[93]

*"It is very hurtful and alienating to see people in the global north say that our deaths are taking away from necessary attention to Covid. The exact opposite is true."*

- Gazan Listener "G," *Letters From Gaza w/ Danya Qato*, Death Panel[94]

Queer Palestinian poet Rasha Abdulhadi urges, **"Whatever sand you can throw on the gears of genocide, do it now. If it's a handful, throw it. If it's a fingernail full, scrape it out and throw."**[95]

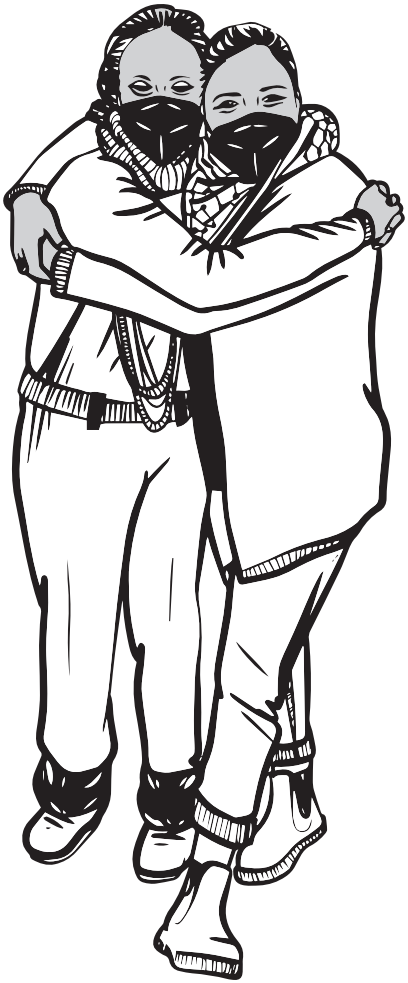
**When you transmit Covid to others at an action, event, or in any kind of public setting, you contribute to mass death and disablement. Full stop.** With the kind of access we have to masks here in the heart of the US empire, there is NO reason not to wear a mask to protect your community.

## AS CO-STRUGGLERS FOR PALESTINIAN LIBERATION, WE MUST REJECT THE NOTION THAT COVID SPREAD IS INEVITABLE. PREVENTING COVID IS PARAMOUNT TO THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE.

**Wear a mask because you love Palestinian resistance.** Wear a mask because genocide is happening and you're not okay with pretending otherwise. Wear a mask because Long Covid and Covid deaths are preventable!

Wear a mask with your keffiyeh and make it cute. Wear a mask because Black, Brown, and Indigenous people across the globe continue to be the most affected by Covid, and white people stopped caring when they realized Covid was impacting people of color more.[96]

Wear a mask because you hate surveillance! Wear a mask to fight individualism! Wear a mask because your boss sucks! Wear a mask to say "fuck you" to Genocide Joe! Wear a mask because we're fighting for Land Back. And reparations. And the fall of the amerikkkan-israeli empire. Wear a mask because you want trans kids to become trans elders. Wear a mask because disabled people deserve to live full lives! Wear a mask because no one should have to risk their life just to go to work, school, the grocery store, the post office, or the doctor's office. **Wear a mask because we need you in our future.**



WEAR A MASK BECAUSE
WE NEED YOU
IN OUR FUTURE

# SKILL-UP YOUR COVID KNOWLEDGE + PROTOCOLS

**COVID MOVES LIKE INVISIBLE SMOKE.** Covid aerosols can quickly fill any crowded, poorly-ventilated space, moving invisibly, like smoke, to infect anyone in the room. Aerosols travel on air currents and linger in the air for hours after an infected person has left. Covid spreads outdoors, too. This understanding of aerosols means the "six-foot rule" is outdated.[97] Assume Covid is spreading in all public air. You can become infected within seconds to minutes of exposure.[98, 99]

**YOU DON'T NEED SYMPTOMS TO SPREAD COVID.** 60% of all transmission happens pre- or asymptomatically, before symptoms start to show up, or without any symptoms at all! Because we can't know with certainty if we have Covid at any moment, universal masking and frequent testing are critical.

**MASKING MATTERS. WEAR A KN95, KF94, OR N95 IF YOU CAN.** Masks are incredibly effective. They work best when everyone wears them. KN95, KF94, and N95 respirators offer aerosol filtration and should be used whenever possible. Surgical masks offer significantly less filtration (and little protection for the wearer), while cloth masks cannot filter aerosols at all, rendering them ineffective. Get free masks from a mask bloc!

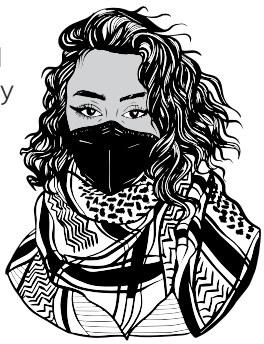
**FIND A MASK THAT FITS.** Make sure your mask fits snug against your face so the air you're breathing is filtered through your mask. Aerosols can sneak through gaps! If you're not getting a good seal, try a different brand or size.[100]

**TEST OFTEN, AND UNDERSTAND THE LIMITATIONS.** Rapid tests (RATs) work best when you swab your cheeks, throat, cough on the swab, then swab your nose. These kinds of tests provide very reliable positive results, but they're far less reliable at showing a true negative. False negatives are common! Rapids become far more reliable when taken in succession over multiple 48-hour periods. It can take a week to 14 days to get a positive, so don't rely on a single negative result. Molecular tests like PCR or NAAT are much more reliable and are best taken 3-5 days after exposure, though they're expensive and harder to access than rapids.[101] As Covid continues to spread, the virus keeps mutating, and our tests become less reliable.[102]

**LAYER PROTECTIONS.** Masking is the strongest tool we have to prevent Covid. Utilizing multiple *layers of protection* (in addition to masking!) can help us prevent Covid's spread.[103] It's important to understand the limitations of our tools and not over-rely on a single layer; for example, vaccination is an extremely important layer of protection, but our current vaccines don't prevent us from transmitting and getting Covid, which is why universal masking is so critical. Other layers of protection include testing, limiting exposure, ventilation and air filtration, CPC mouthwash or nasal sprays,[104] and isolating when sick and after exposures.

**DON'T LET COVID LINGER, CLEAN THE AIR.** Use ventilation and air filtration to limit the amount of virus in the air.[105] Ventilation is most effective coming from multiple points to allow cross-breeze — open windows across the room from each other!

**COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND OFTEN.** A 2024 study showed 75% of adults have concealed illness in interpersonal interactions, knowingly putting others' in harm's way.[106] Combat individualism by modeling behavior, providing tests, initiating symptom checks, and conducting contract tracing. Create compelling virtual options for safe, at-home event participation!



**PREVENT COVID TO PREVENT LONG COVID.** Long Covid has no cure. Preventing infection is critical to preventing Long Covid and Covid deaths.

**NEED A MASK?** Many cities across the world have mask blocs that distribute masks and tests for free! Find your nearest bloc at maskbloc.org.

**PLANNING AN IN-PERSON EVENT?** Check out the People's CDC's Safer In-Person Gathering Toolkit at seeyousafer.org for fact-checked research and guidelines to gather more safely.

**KNOW THE SCIENCE!** To learn about the up-to-date science on Covid, check out johnsnowproject.org; information is organized by the five key things everyone needs to know about Covid. It's an approachable place to start.

**GROW DISABILITY JUSTICE.** Get to know Sins Invalid's 10 Principles of Disability Justice for a Black and Brown crip framework at tinyurl.com/DJ10Principles.

**PANDEMIC SOLIDARITY.** Check out Pandemic Solidarity for the Long Future, a Black-led, multiracial group building collective power and creating blueprints for the long future. Learn more at pandemicsolidarity.org.

**LEARN ABOUT PALESTINE.** Read up on history, myths, rainbow washing, and FAQs at decolonizepalestine.com, an incredible resource written by two Palestinians in Ramallah.

**BOYCOTT, DIVEST, SANCTIONS.** Modeled on South Africa's anti-apartheid campaign, follow the call of the Palestinian BDS movement: refuse to fund and support genociders and their collaborators! Read up on the target brands to boycott at bdsmovement.org.

**JOIN THE MOVEMENT.** Read, print, and distribute *A Promise, Not a Statement: Organizing for Palestine Solidarity 101, By a Palestinian in Diaspora* by Veera Sulaiman, a must-read 2024 zine.

**SUPPORT RESISTANCE.** Uplift the steadfast commitment and love for the land of the indigenous Palestinian resistance. Follow the Resistance News Network @PalestineResist on Telegram.

## FIND AND DOWNLOAD THIS ZINE FOR FREE AT:

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Use this QR code to read the endnotes and find an accompanying reading list.

RIMONA ESKAYO × SHEYAM 2024